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AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES  
AT ATHENS.  
THE NEWLY DISCOVERED HEAD OF IRIS FROM  
THE FRIEZE OF THE PARTHENON.

[PLATE II.]

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In the successful excavations that have been carried on during the last few years on the Akropolis at Athens, now brought to a close, the closing days were peculiarly fortunate for the excavators. I must refer the readers to the *Δελτίον* for an account of these excavations; but I wish to publish one discovery which may perhaps be considered the crowning event in this series of fortunate finds, though it merely consists of a fragment of marble not more than a foot in size. It will be shown in the following remarks—it is to be hoped, conclusively—that the fragment is a most interesting portion of the Frieze of the Parthenon.

“As is well known, the Frieze of the Parthenon formed a continuous band of sculpture in low relief which ran round the outer wall of the *cella*, with its two smaller halls in front and back, the *pronaos* and the *tamieion*. Like every peripteric temple, the rectangular temple proper, with its halls closed in by walls on all sides, was surrounded by a colonnade which supported the roof and projected over the walls of the actual temple. The distance from the walls to the columns (exclusive of these) varies from 2.96 to 3.57 m. (9.7 to 11.7 ft.). This space was paved with white marble and afforded shady walks to the visitors to the Akropolis. The plain wall is bounded above by a slightly projecting band (*ταυρία*) under which are small blocks, called by Vitruvius *regulae*, which in the Doric order to which the temple

belongs would lead us to expect above them the triglyphon, a frieze subdivided by metopes (*μετοπαί, metopae*) and triglyphs (*τρίγλυφοι*). Instead of this triglyphon, however, we here have a continuous frieze (*ζωφόρος, διάζωμα*) which ran round the four sides of this outer wall like a belt, or rather like a band uniting its two ends on the forehead of a victor. It was 11.9 m. (39 ft.) above the pavement of the colonnade, and above it a painted ornamentation after the manner of a cornice completed the decorations of the wall, which was joined above to the entablature of the outer colonnade by a ceiling, just as below, the marble pavement joined the base of the columns with the wall. The length of the frieze was 159.42 m. (522.8 ft.), of which 21.18 m. (69.5 ft.) covered each of the narrower walls of the front and back, while 58.53 m. (191.9 ft.) decorated each longer side of the rectangular building. It consists of numerous slabs carefully joined together, almost exactly 1 m. (3 ft. 3.95 in. according to Stuart) in height.”<sup>1</sup>

The subject represented on this frieze is generally acknowledged to be the procession on the occasion of the Panathenaic Festival. The participants in this procession started at sunrise on the last day of the Festival, the birthday of Athene, from the outer Kerameikos, passed through the Dipylon, the Dromos, and the chief street of the Inner Kerameikos, to the market-place, then to the Eleusinion, to the north-east corner of the Akropolis, to the west, and through the Propylaea to the Temple of Athene Polias, upon whose altar the hecatombs offered by Athens and its dependent states were sacrificed, and a great festive meal concluded the whole celebration. Accordingly, in the frieze on the narrow west end of the Temple is represented a scene of preparation for the procession. There are groups of horsemen, many of them already mounted, others in the act of mounting, another forcing the bit into the mouth of his restive horse, another drawing on his boots, another again trying to hold back a rearing horse, and so on. The long north and south sides present the procession proper. In it are not only the divisions of horsemen, the chariots with charioteers and hoplites; but also groups of men and youths and maidens on foot carrying branches or vases, or musical or sacrificial instruments of which in ancient life the authors give us an account. Finally there are the sacrificial cows and sheep which bring us to the narrow east or front side where the advancing maidens are met by the magistrates supposed to be awaiting them on the Akropolis. With this the procession is brought to a close,

<sup>1</sup> WALDSTEIN, *Essays on the Art of Pheidias*, p. 191.

but the scene has only reached its climax ; for in the central portion of this frieze forming the front of the Temple are represented the gods and goddesses who are supposed to be witnessing the display in honor of Athene. Accordingly, Athene heads the right-hand division of gods, as Zeus heads the left-hand division ; and these two divisions are kept apart by the introduction of a scene supposed by many to represent the dedication of the Peplos to Athene, by others the preparation on the part of the Priest and Priestess to perform the sacrifice of the hecatombs offered to the goddess.

The gods, grouped on either side of the central scene, are seated in dignified repose beside one another. After Athene we have, according to Flasch,<sup>2</sup> Hephaistos, then Poseidon, then Dionysos, and then Demeter (called by others, perhaps correctly, Peitho). This last figure and Dionysos fortunately have their heads preserved, and they form two of the most perfect works that have come down to us from antiquity. After Demeter we have Aphrodite, against whose knee the youthful Eros is leaning, with whom the series of gods on this side comes to an end. On the other side, next to Zeus, who is seated upon a more elaborate throne, is his divine spouse, Hera, beside whom stands as an attendant a youthful female figure, according to Flasch, Iris, according to others, Hebe or Nike. Then follows Ares, then Artemis, then Apollo, and the gods on this side are brought to a close by Hermes.

The bodies of all these figures are in comparatively good preservation ; but the heads of all, with the exception of the two above mentioned, have been so strongly corroded and worn or broken away, that no trace of modelling remains. The central marble slab, beginning with Iris and including the central scene, ended on the other side with Hephaistos. The upper corners of this slab were at some period broken away and carried with them the head and neck of Iris, which figure was thus found by Lord Elgin without a head and is to be seen in this state in the British Museum.

The excavations carried on to the southwest of the Akropolis, laying bare the wall built by Kimon, and descending to great depth to the primeval rock of the Akropolis, showed that after the Persian invasion Kimon levelled the surface of the Akropolis and filled in all those portions where the rock sunk to considerable depth below the highest point. His wall, surrounding the entire Akropolis, binds the whole compactly together and joins the rocky bosses into the complete unity of

<sup>2</sup> *Zum Parthenonfries*: Würzburg, 1877.

the levelled citadel as it has now come down to us. All the objects found in the excavations carried on along this Kimonian wall in this and other portions of the Akropolis, date from a period preceding the Persian invasion when the enemy destroyed the buildings and monuments on the citadel. And there can be no doubt that these objects were thrown in during the operation of filling up and levelling the surface of the Akropolis when Kimon undertook the restoration of the Athenian citadel.

But above the wall of Kimon, which is built with massive blocks of careful masonry, there is another wall of nondescript character, which projects to the present day above the surface of the Akropolis and forms a kind of parapet. This wall is composed of stones, Roman brick, and earthwork, and has been considered a barbarian wall. We shall recur presently to the date of this structure.

Sticking in this wall, just where it joins the wall of Kimon, was found the marble fragment with which we are now concerned. It is a piece of Pentelic marble 0.275 m. in the widest portion, and 0.22 m. in height in the highest portion; the slab is 0.155 m. thick in the thickest part exclusive of relief, and the highest relief is 0.05 m., the fracture in the back being very uneven, comparatively thin at the back of the head, and thickest at the top left angle: at this corner there is a facing of about an inch in width running round the edge of the left side that is not visible in our plate and surrounding the rougher surface within it. It thus formed part of a frieze block, and has the same working of the sides where block joined block as is found in the slabs of the Frieze of the Parthenon which are 54 centimetres in thickness. The face of this marble fragment (PLATE II) contains a head in low relief turned to the left, where a curved flattish elevation, rising from the back and shoulder of the figure, runs upwards to the left edge of the fragment. The left edge and top are thus cleanly cut, and therefore this fragment formed the top corner of some relief. The head, in excellent preservation (only the tip of the nose has been broken away), shows that simplicity and breadth of style and that marked technique of low relief (the edges almost undercut running straight down to the background) which distinguish the work of the Parthenon Frieze; and Mr. Kavvadias, the Director General of Excavations, and Mr. Staïs conjectured that it was a piece of the Parthenon Frieze. They asked me to examine the fragment, and I at once felt assured that it was the head belonging to Iris in the East Frieze of the Parthenon, the slab to which it belongs now being among

the Elgin marbles in the British Museum (*Figure 1*). When a cast of this slab was produced the identification was placed beyond all doubt.

The head and neck are turned towards the left, worked in profile, with a very slight turn towards the front as if to make room for a flat elevation rising beside the head. This elevation was evidently a wing, and in the original was no doubt painted to indicate its detail drawing. The modelling of the head and neck are of that broad simple character which mark Pheidian art, and yet with this large style the artist has been able to add a singular grace and charm to the nobility of character. The modelling of the hair is not overelabo-



FIGURE 1.—Slab from the East Frieze of the Parthenon (in the British Museum) representing Zeus, Hera, and Iris, to which belongs the newly discovered head of Iris.

rate, in simple broadish ridges, and yet varied in the flow of line, conveying well its peculiar texture. It is similar, in this respect, to the excellent head of Demeter in this same frieze; yet the whole peculiar mode of wearing the hair is one which marks a more youthful figure. The hair falls over the brow in short curls and over the temples, and it had been hanging loosely down the back till, with her left hand, Iris collected it into a knot at the back of her head. This is the action of the figure in the moment represented by the sculptor. There are several instances in the frieze in which male figures are raising their hands to their heads, tying the taenia, or otherwise arranging their hair. So, in the West Frieze (Michaelis), Plate ix, Fig. 2; North

Frieze, Plate XI, Fig. 38,<sup>3</sup> Plate XIII, Figs. 97, 125; South Frieze, Plate XI, Fig. 121 (a similar motive to the preceding one), and West Frieze, Plate IX, Fig. 2.

In general, this head, which may well be compared to the head of Demeter, is a youthful translation of the same type. As its dimensions (the head of the fragment is 0.09 m. from brow to chin, that of Demeter 0.10. m; from bend of nostril to the lobe of the ear in the fragment 0.06 m. and in Demeter 0.07 m.) are comparatively smaller, the proportions being exactly those that obtain between the figure of Iris and the figure of Demeter.

In the extant marble in the British Museum (*Fig. 1*), we see, on the right side of Iris, traces of a wing and the uplifted left arm. Now the wing here corresponds exactly to the right wing on our fragment; and, when the fragment was placed on the cast of the relief from the British Museum, the wrist of the upraised left hand of Iris naturally continued to the extant remains of the fingers of the hand clearly to be seen collecting the hair into a knot on the head of the fragment. The little finger and the third finger have been injured somewhat, but the middle finger is quite intact. They are distinctly seen when looked at from above, but can be distinguished with sufficient clearness in the front view here given on PLATE II.

In the restorations made by Stuart and copied by Worsley, the head is wrongly turned towards our right; but, when the slight remaining fragment of the neck in the Iris of the British Museum is examined, it will be seen that the head was turned to our left, and this our fragment now places beyond a doubt. Henning's restoration is more correct in this respect. I am now awaiting the arrival of the cast of the fragment in its thickness, which Mr. Kavvadias has kindly promised me. This will be sent to the British Museum, and I hope to place it on the figure in the original frieze, when the identification, which really needs no further confirmation, will be settled beyond all dispute.

The question of the history of this central slab and of our head must be dwelt upon in a few words. As is known, the Parthenon remained in its original condition until the close of the fifth or beginning of the

<sup>3</sup> In this figure we have the complete motive of the Diadumenos, both hands placed up tying the taenia, the right hand higher than the left hand; and, when we remember the statue of a youthful Anadumenos by Pheidias mentioned by Pausanias (VI. 4, 5), we may be justified in conjecturing that this subject, repeated in the famous statue of Polykleitos, and applied to graceful female figures of which so many adaptations have come down to us, may have been the invention of Pheidias.

sixth century A. D., when it was converted into a Christian church. Some authorities now hold that this was done under Constantine. The alteration then made in the structure was the transference of the main entrance from the east to the west, and in the east end an apse was built. This probably necessitated the taking down of the central slab. Carrey, in 1674, did not see it, and omits it from the drawings of the frieze. Pierre Babin, in his letter to the Abbé Pécoul<sup>4</sup> in 1672, after describing the Frieze, mentions one slab as being not in its place, but behind the door of the Temple (then Mosque). In Chandler's time (1765) it was let into the wall of the fortress. He refers to it as the piece which probably ranged in the centre of the cell and contained "a venerable person with a beard reading in a large volume which is partly supported by a boy."<sup>5</sup> No doubt the priest with the boy and the cloak. In 1785, Worsley saw it lying on the ground before the east front of the Temple; while, according to Visconti, it is again immured in a house whence Lord Elgin's workmen took it.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the slab remained for about thirteen centuries detached from its place on the Akropolis. But in taking down this heavy block the top corners were probably chipped off; the right one contained no figure, the left one this head of Iris. Now it is unlikely that this small fragment would have remained about in such excellent preservation for any length of time. And thus, shortly after the removal of the slab, it was probably used in the building of the wall in which it was found, which wall is thus likely to belong to the Byzantine period. Now the central figures of the Eastern Pediment of the Parthenon were not extant when Carrey made his drawings in 1674, fourteen years before the destruction of the Temple by the Venetians under Morosini. These were, in all likelihood, removed to make some large windows or similar structures in the east front of the temple, when it was converted into a church. And, if these figures were then thrown from their places and reduced to fragments on the ground, it is likely that portions of them are also immured in this wall, which ought therefore to be taken down and examined. It can easily be erected again in its present picturesque condition; and I am happy to say that the Commission recently appointed to consider what remains to be done on the Akropolis, unanimously decided to examine this wall.

By the discovery of this fragment, another important light is thrown

<sup>4</sup> F. MICHAELIS, *Der Parthenon*, Anhang III, p. 336, 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Travels in Greece*: Oxford, 1776, p. 51.

<sup>6</sup> WALDSTEIN, *ibid.* p. 264.



upon the question of the genuineness of reduced Roman casts of the Frieze, the bearings of which upon the genuineness of the terracotta plaques at Paris, Copenhagen, and Rome I have discussed in Note F of Essay VII of my *Essays on the Art of Pheidias*. On page 265, I put the question, "Are the Roman casts, which have certainly been in existence since 1840, reductions taken by Collard precisely from the early casts of Choiseul-Gouffier, reduced perhaps by Andreoli?" and I inclined then to answer in the affirmative. But the fragment shows this not to have been the case: for in the Roman cast the head of Iris is turned towards our right, and has thus evidently been influenced by the restoration of Stuart. The Roman cast of the Frieze is thus not connected with the originals in a more perfect state than Lord Elgin forwarded them to London. Though this does not yet finally prove the terracottas I found, to be forgeries, it goes far to make this probable. It is by such discoveries that this question will finally be decided, and not by mere assertions on the part of those who have not carefully studied all the points and have in no way contributed by unwarrantable expression of opinion to the settling of the problem.

Finally, I should like to mention that I desired in treating of this head to dwell upon the method of representing the eye in the heads from the Parthenon. In a note to an article on a head in Madrid published by me in 1884,<sup>7</sup> I pointed to the peculiar treatment of the upper eyelid, which treatment forms a conclusive chronological landmark for Greek sculpture. In all the eyes of the Archaic period down to, say, the year 460 B. C., the eyelids join at their outer angle on one plane. After this period, owing, no doubt, to the influence of pictorial art, and the consideration of the shadows thrown by the brow on the upper eyelid in real life, the upper lid is carried beyond and over the lower lid at the outer angles. In the sculptures of the Parthenon we have the first indication of this innovation, some eyes having the old treatment, others the new; and after that period the projecting upper eyelid becomes the rule. I have for a long time examined eyes of ancient statues with this consideration, and what was conjecture has taken the form of a law. I hope, with the aid and co-operation of Mr. C. D. Freeman, to publish the results of this investigation with numerous illustrative instances.

CHARLES WALDSTEIN.

*American School, Athens,*

January, 1889.

<sup>7</sup> *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. v, p. 174.



Héliog. Dujardin

HEAD OF IRIS

From the east frieze of the Parthenon